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ABSTRACT

This guide is designed for school principals who bear the responsibility for the successful administration of Virginia's Competency Program. Several aspects of the program are described: legislative background; graduation requirements concerning citizenship and qualifying for further education or work; tests used to assess reading and mathematics skills; scoring procedures; opportunity to repeat tests; and school district versus state responsibilities. Information is included on: criteria which may be used to evaluate students' competency; guidelines for test interpretation; testing procedures for exceptional students; recordkeeping instructions; training topics for staff development programs; tips on insuring curriculum validity; and a list of benefits associated with the program. Suggested student competencies and performance indicators are appended for secondary school mathematics, reading, and citizenship. Other Appendices include a two-page news release. (GDC)

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SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING VIRGINIA'S MINIMUM COMPETENCY PROGRAM

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FOREWORD

The competency movement is one of the most significant educational innovations to appear on the educational scene. School principals carry the responsibility for the successful administration of this program. The inservice session provided by the Virginia Department of Education gave an overview of the Virginia Competency Program as well as specific suggested activities to be utilized by the principal and staff during the implementation of this important effort.

The information program for parents, students, and teachers is an essential ingredient to success or failure. Students must understand the importance of performing well and know the objectivies to be tested. Parents should also understand the objectives of the program and the competencies to be measured.

The principal will need to work with teachers to provide for students a review of mathematical skills, particularly computational skills, since many students may not have taken a course in mathematics for several years. Students should also have some practice in the area of reading before taking this particular test. It is important that students be able to reflect truly their ability because publication will be made of the number of students passing the competency test. It is important that neither a technical aspect of the test nor a lack of understanding of objectives cause a student to fail. The tests should assist in identifying students who have a problem in reading or mathematics.

Dr. Carl L. Riehm
Assistant Superintendent for
Curriculum and Instruction

MINIMUM COMPETENCIES FOR GRADUATION
INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN

Introduction

The designation of minimum competencies as a requirement for graduation from a secondary school in Virginia originated as a part of the 1976 revision of the Standards for Accrediting Secondary Schools in Virginia. The 1978 General Assembly gave further support to the concept by mandating state-wide minimum competencies for graduation as part of the Standards of Quality for Public Schools in Virginia - 1978-80. Section 9-C of the Standards states:

> "It is the policy of the Commonwealth that the awarding of a high school diploma shall be based upon achievement. In order to receive a high school diploma from an accredited secondary school after January 1, 1981, students shall earn the number of units of credit prescribed by the Board of Education and attain minimum competencies prescribed by the Board of Education. Attainment of such competencies shall be demonstrated by means of a test prescribed by the Board of Education."

The Board of Education responded to the above mandate by designating reading and mathematical skills as the areas for which minimum competencies are to be prescribed and assessed by the state. The Board also approved a revision of the Graduation Eligibility section of the Standards for Accrediting Secondary Schools in Virginia. This revision is compatible with the Standards of Quality mandate in Section 9-C.

Graduation Requirements

The revised "Graduation Eligibility" section of the Standards for Accrediting Secondary Schools in Virginia retained the provision for local identification and assessment in two areas. It reads:

> "In addition to the units of credit specified in these standards, an accredited school shall require as a condition of graduation that students demonstrate mastery of minimum competency in the areas of reading and mathematics on tests prescribed by the Board of Education. Local authorities shall also require evidence, through performance related assessment tasks as part of the instructional program and/or through a test if preferred by the locality, that graduates have attained minimum competencies in the following:
>
> 1. Essential citizenship skills, concepts, and knowledge of history and government necessary for responsible participation in American society within the world community.
>
> 2. The knowledge and skills to qualify for further education or employment."

The standards above place upon the local school the responsibility for identifying and assessing competencies in the areas of citizenship and preparation for further education and/or employment. No time line has been set for the initial assessment of these competency areas. It is doubtful if many students will have acquired all of these competencies prior to the 11th grade; therefore, it may be appropriate to plan for assessment at the 10th, 11th, or 12th grade level. It will be necessary to have evidence of successful completion of those two competency areas by the spring of 1981.

Assessment of Reading and Mathematical Skills

The Board of Education has prescribed two tests for use in assessing state-wide minimum competencies for the graduates of 1981 and 1982. The two test prescribed are the IOX Basic Skills Test in Reading, published by The Instructional Objectives Exchange, for the assessment of minimum competencies in reading and a modification of a test developed for the Virginia Beach City

Public Schools by Scholastic Testing Service for the assessment of minimum competencies in mathematics.

The Virginia State-wide Minimum Competencies Program will be initiated with the assessment of reading and mathematical skills for 10th-grade students during the fall of 1978. Ninth grade students will be assessed during the week of April 2, 1979. Schools will receive testing materials based on response to Superintendents Memorandum Number 69, dated July 7, 1978. Estimated time required for a student to complete both test instruments is 2½-3 hours. Guidelines for administering the test will be included in the test packets to be sent to the respective schools.

The test instruments for reading and mathematics which have been prescribed by the Board of Education are to be used for the initial assessment of those students who are scheduled to graduate in 1981 and 1982. A decision has not been reached as to whether these tests or some other tests will be used subsequent to the graduating class of 1982. All prospective members of the 1981 and 1982 graduating classes must be given an opportunity to take the test. These include handicapped students in all categories. See appendix for suggested accommodations for handicapped students.

In all probability, there will be considerable anxiety among students concerning the requirement for taking the test and the consequences of test results. Every effort should be made to inform fully each student and parent concerning the minimum competencies program objectives, the assessment procedures, and follow-up activities. A special effort should be made to relieve student anxieties through counseling in small group (15-25) sessions. Follow-up and additional instruction for those students who do not receive a satisfactory score should be planned.

Test Scoring

The completed test answer sheets will be returned to the Department of Education for scoring. Scores and individual student profiles should be returned to the school prior to mid-year. The answer to questions concerning the passing score and whether or not an exit test at the 11th or 12th grade will be required is not yet available. It is anticipated, however, that the passing score will be determined prior to the return of the score to the schools. A decision on the matter of an exit test should be available prior to the end of the 1978-79 school year.

The inclusion of student profile sheets as a part of the scoring service will provide the school with documentation which will enable the teacher to plan further instruction for those students who need to have their skills improved in certain areas of the minimum competencies.

Retesting

One of the purposes of giving the test to students who are in the ninth grade is to identify those students who would probably have difficulty meeting the requirements if the tests were given at a later date. If such students are identified and appropriate instructions provided, they shall be given the opportunity to take an alternate form of the original test after the completion of further instruction. Alternate forms of the test will be provided by the Department of Education.

Local Responsibilities

A specific time line has not been set for the assessment of the minimum competencies in the areas of essential skills and concepts of citizenship and knowledge and skills to qualify for further education or employment. Schools which have not already completed their responsibilities for identification and adoption of assessment procedures should begin this task.

Each school should identify competencies and assessment procedures early enough to give lead time for planning instruction.

Interpretation and Assessment of Essential Skills and Concepts of Citizenship

Education for responsible citizenship is an individual, family, school, and community endeavor. Many experiences from kindergarten through grade twelve serve as a foundation for citizenship education. The social studies program, however, is a major curricular area for which a central focus is citizenship education.

Essential skills and concepts of citizenship in American society are much the same today as they were many years ago, even in the midst of rapid change. Responsible participation by the individual in American society continues to require certain basic essentials knowledge, skills, commitment, and action. In application, each generation defines essential citizenship skills and concepts to fit the demands of its times.

Terms such as, law abiding, participation, informed, and responsible are often used in defining citizenship. However, if asked to define and rank such terms in order of importance, Americans might find it difficult to reach an agreement. Despite a lack of agreement on the precise meaning of such concepts, there are some common assumptions regarding citizenship education. Such assumptions include the need for students to understand democratic ideals and traditions, political and economic institutions and processes, personal rights and responsibilities, awareness of citizen-group activities which influence public policy, and the recognition of the importance of responsible participation in daily civic affairs.

Minimum competencies in the areas of citizenship are not intended to define the entire scope of the social studies program in the public schools but rather to center on minimum essential skills and concepts drawn from the social studies

which are necessary for responsible participation in American life. Citizenship education should contribute to the students' basic knowledge, understanding, and ability to gather and evaluate information in order to make responsible decisions in everyday life. The role and process of economics, government, and the role of history in shaping everyday life, as well as the impact of world affairs on the individual are important ingredients in the process of preparing students for responsible participation in American society. Skills such as obtaining appropriate services available through social and governmental agencies, voter registration, analyzing information involved in deciding how to vote on an issue, utilizing historical information as a basis for solving current problems, identifying factors that influence the prices the consumer must pay in the marketplace, locating information, following directions, and reading maps may be thought of as minimal.

"Local authorities shall require evidence, through performance related assessment tasks as part of the instructional program and/or through a test if preferred by a locality, the graduates have attained the minimum competency in citizenship."*

A variety of techniques may be used in assessing student performance relative to mastery of the minimum competency requirement in citizenship. Recognizing that citizenship education is in reality a total school responsibility, the avenues for measurement of this competency may not be totally limited to classroom experiences in social studies. Although school divisions have the option of administering a test as the assessment instrument, the following sample indicators might also be considered as evidence of competency:

1. Participation in civic and school activities;
2. Successful completion of courses which have citizenship competencies as objectives;

*Standards for Accrediting Secondary Schools in Virginia, Revised July 1978.

3. Acceptance of civic and school responsibilities and duties;

4. Acquisition of specific knowledge, skills, and concepts of citizenship as measured by teacher prepared tests;

5. Completion of special projects, simulation and role playing exercises which have citizenship competencies as objectives;

6. Personal student interviews conducted by school personnel.

Local school divisions will need to determine an acceptable level of student performance in the attainment of the student competency in citizenship regardless of the type or nature of assessment which is selected.

Interpretation and Assessment of Knowledge and Skills to Qualify for Further Education or Employment

With respect to the minimum competencies requirement concerning preparation for further education or preparation for employment, the nature of the curriculum, instruction in the high school, and the admission requirements of institutions of post high school education are such that formal testing is probably not necessary to meet the assessment requirements of the Standard. In most cases, the assessment of whether or not a student is prepared for college entrance can be ascertained in one to two ways: (1) evidence of acceptance for admission to a school of higher education; or (2) attainment of an acceptable score on a college entrance examination. If neither of these indicators is available, the course of study which the student has completed may be used in making the judgment. If the student has successfully completed what has been designated as a college preparatory curriculum, this would seem to be a legitimate basis on which to make a judgment. If students have received consistently high grades in most if not all subjects taken it could be assumed that they have the aptitude and preparation for higher education. Other indicators could be attitudes toward school and learning, motivation toward certain goals, and judgment of teachers and guidance counselors.

There are also a number of ways to determine whether or not a student

has met the minimum competencies for employment. The state plan for vocational education lists four ways in which a student's readiness for employment or attainment of a marketable skill can be determined. A list of these methods can be found in the appendix. In addition to the methods listed in the appendix, a judgment may be made on the basis of other factors for those students not taking vocational courses. It is recognized that some students will have developed general skills that will enable them to be employed in a position that does not require specific vocational training. The determination of whether a student meets the requirements for such employment could be made on the basis of such things as progress made in the basic skills, grades attained in certain courses, aptitude tests, teacher/counselor judgments, or successful retention of a part-time job. Local school personnel will, no doubt, think of other legitimate criteria for measuring a student's competency for employment.

Exceptional Students

There are several categories of students who may be considered as exceptional with reference to the minimum competency requirements for graduation. Students who are eligible for special education instruction would normally be considered as exceptional; however, the wording of the minimum competency mandate is such that every student must be given the opportunity to take the minimum competency test and will be required to achieve a satisfactory score in order to receive a high school diploma.

A second category of students who might be considered exceptional is foreign exchange students. These students must also be given the opportunity to take the test if they desire a diploma from a Virginia high school. The third category normally considered to be exceptional, in terms or certain graduation requirements, is transfer students from other states during their junior or senior year. As in the case of the first

two categories, there is no provision for exceptions.

It is evident, therefore, that special efforts will have to be made to accommodate the three categories of students mentioned. This will, no doubt, involve accommodations concerning the time at which the test is administered, format or procedures for administering the test, and instructional efforts. In other words, in order to be fair to these exceptional students, a departure from the normal course of assessment and instruction if needed is justifiable and permissable.

Record Keeping

Score labels for the reading and mathematics test suitable for attachment to the student's permanent record will be furnished with a student profile sheet. If a student has made an acceptable score on the test, no further record of this test needs to be made. If, however, his/her score is not acceptable, a record needs to be made of those areas in which further instruction will be needed. A copy should be placed in the cumulative folder and other copies to appropriate individuals; the student, parents, and teachers.

A master list, categorized by minimum competency area, of those students needing further instruction should be compiled for purposes of planning instruction and monitoring. This information could probably be data processed if such facilities are available.

Where the need for instruction becomes apparent, it would probably be well to enter in the student's record a notation of instruction given in response to the student's needs. This will serve for both planning and accountability.

Staff Development

The principal as the school's instructional leader is responsible for organizing a staff development program which will contribute to an understanding of the minimum competencies concept on the part of the entire faculty. Resource persons are available from the companies whose tests are being used for assessment of the minimum competencies and from the Department of Education.

Some of the topics which should be on the staff development agenda are:

1. Scheduling and content for student orientation to program and the tests;
2. Training of testing supervisors and monitors;
3. Assisting teachers to understand competencies;
4. Determination of instructional validity for the various minimum competencies;
5. Determination of appropriate instruction procedures and personnel for teaching those students who do not meet the minimum competency requirements.

In addition to these staff development responsibilities, there are several other management responsibilities. An informational meeting may be scheduled for parents and the public at large. Press releases prior to the assessment and following receipt of results will need to be prepared. Brochures, wall posters, film strips, and video tapes are being prepared by the Department of Education for local use. During September and the first part of October, teachers should plan to include activities in their instruction which would contribute to student success in responding to the tests for reading and mathematical skills.

There will be instances when individual conferences with students and parents will be very desirable. Parents and students need assurance that the necessary instruction will be given. The school plan of action needs to be organized and shared with students and parents. Staff members should be trained for these responsibilities.

Planning for Instruction

In planning for instruction within the minimum competencies program, it is essential to insure instructional validity with reference to the required competencies. The exact place in the curriculum or point of student progress at which a competency is taught needs to be identified.

It may be desirable to reinforce the initial instruction at a subsequent point. There may be gaps in the curriculum which need to be filled, or certain topics may need introduction at a different point or place in the curriculum. Essential topics should be dealt with at the appropriate time.

Wherever the need becomes evident--through teacher perception, testing, or otherwise--for additional instruction, provisions must be made to give that instruction. Localities may specify courses or special work for students who have this need. Identification of staff members who are best suited for this type of instruction can best be determined locally.

Instruction should be planned in a manner which will insure the inclusion of knowledge and skills related to minimum competencies as instructional objectives. They should be planned to the extent possible as an intergal part of the regular instructional program. If the objectives are not included in the current program to which all students have access, a revision of the curriculum should be undertaken in order that these objectives can be included.

It would be desirable to give students multiple opportunities to demonstrate competencies during the course of instruction and prior to taking the tests.

The list of competencies and performance indicators should be made available to the students. Instruction concerning test format and test response techniques should be included in pretest preparation and instruction for students.

Interpretation and Expected Benefits

No universally accepted definition of the term minimum competency is available. Virginia's program is based on a set of skills identified through concensus deemed desirable and reasonable for high school graduates to achieve. It is expected that the requirement that students meet these generally accepted and agreed upon minimum competencies will result in a significant number of benefits to students, the school, and the public. Among the expected benefits are the following:

1. Improvement of curriculum definition with reference to scope and sequence;
2. Provision of a diagnostic tool for teachers and special instructional assistance for students;
3. Provision of a sound basis for evaluating the school curriculum and the instructional program with reference to minimum expectations;
4. Definition for students and parents of the minimum educational expectations established by the school and community;
5. Increase of public support of the school as communities and schools work together to establish competencies;
6. Enhancement of the student's personal development, civic responsibility, and economic productivity.

SUGGESTED STUDENT COMPETENCIES FOR MATHEMATICS

Student Competencies	Performance Indicators
The student will be able to:	
1. Read and write numerals correctly.	Given numerals naming whole numbers less than ten million, the student will read the numerals. Given numerals naming whole numbers less than ten thousand, the student will write the word name for the number.
2. Compare numerical values of whole numbers.	Given a set of whole numbers, named by numerals of not more than four digits, the student will arrange the numerals in order from smallest numerical value to largest.
3. Add, subtract, multiply, and divide whole numbers.	Given two, three, or four whole numbers named by numerals of not more than four digits, the student will find the sum. Given two whole numbers named by numerals of not more than three digits, the student will find the difference. Given two whole numbers named by numerals of not more than three digits, the student will find the product. Given a dividend named by a numeral of no more than four digits and a divisor named by a numeral of no more than two digits, the student will find the quotient.
The student will be able to:	
4. Add, subtract, multiply, and divide decimal fractions.	Given two decimal fractions named by numerals of no more than four digits and having no more than three places to the right of the decimal point, the student will find the sum or difference. Given two decimal fractions, named by numerals of three digits with the decimal point in any position, and the digits of their product, the student will properly place the missing decimal point in the product. Given a dividend of no more than four digits and no more than three decimal places, a divisor of no more than two digits and no more than one decimal place, and the digits of the quotient, the student will properly place the decimal point in the quotient.
5. Multiply simple fractions.	Given two simple fractions which have denominators of 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5, the student will find the product.
6. Express percents as equivalent decimal fractions.	Given a percent, the student will write the equivalent decimal fraction.

Student Competencies	Performance Indicators
The student will be able to:	
7. Express fractions as equivalent decimal numbers.	Given a common fraction which has a single digit denominator, the student will write the equivalent decimal fraction.
8. Find a given percent of a number.	Given a number and a percent (from 1-100 inclusive) the student will find the percentage.
9. Read and draw conclusions from information contained in simple bar, broken-line and circle graphs.	Given a bar or broken-line graph, the student will estimate and compare quantitative information. Given a circle graph in which each sector is labeled as a percent of the whole the student will compare quantitative information. Given a bar, broken-line, or circle graph and a statement of inference, the student will state whether the inference is true or false based on information on the graph. (The inference will be a simple statement relative to comparisons of size or frequency and trends of increase, decrease, or constancy.)
10. Determine distance based on information from a given map.	Given a map and scale, the student will indicate the route of least mileage between two locations.

Student Competencies	Performance Indicators
The student will be able to:	
11. Read tables to determine taxes, interest, or insurance premiums.	Given a specified situation and a federal or state income tax table, the student will find the correct amount of tax. Given the cost of an item(s) and a sales tax table, the student will find the correct amount of sales tax.
12. Identify objects and/or lines positioned in such a manner that the concept of parallelism is represented. And, identify certain parts - center, radius, and diameter - of a circle.	Given a set of figures, the student will identify those which best represent the concept of parallelism. Given an appropriate drawing of a circle, the student will identify the center, a radius, and a diameter.
13. Determine the perimeter and area of rectangular regions.	Given the dimensions of a rectangular region, the student will find the areas of the region. Given the lengths of the sides of a rectangular region, the student will find the perimeter of the region.
14. Identify units of measure for length, mass (weight), and capacity; read a thermometer; and determine elapsed time. (Maximum 12 hour time interval.)	Given a list of units of measure, the student will identify those indicating length (metre, centimetre, kilometre; foot, inch, mile) mass/weight (kilogram, gram; pound) and capacity (litre, mill, litre; pint, quart, gallon), or vice versa.

Student Competencies	Performance Indicators
14. Con't	Given a drawing of either a Celsius or Fahrenheit thermometer, the student will write the indicated temperature to the nearest degree. Given two times (to the nearest 1/2 hour designation) within a 12 hour time interval, the student will determine the elapsed time.
15. Solve practical problems dealing with banking, consumer purchases, and personal earnings.	Given an amount of money, $1, $5, or $10, and the total amount of purchase, the student will determine the correct change. Given a specified number of hours worked and an hourly rate of pay, the student will compute the wages. Given the gross earnings and the amounts of deduction for social security and federal and state taxes, the student will compute the net earnings. Given the appropriate information the student will write a check. Given the appropriate information, the student will complete a check stub.

Student Competencies	Performance Indicators
15. Con't	Given the prices of similar packaged goods the student will determine and compare unit prices. Given the regular price of an item and a rate of discount, the student will compute the amount of discount.

SUGGESTED STUDENT COMPETENCIES FOR READING

Student Competencies	Performance Indicators
1. The student will locate specific information contained in printed material:	Use library skills to locate information Read and locate information from a map. Determine from a billing statement the information contained on that bill. Locate specific information included in advertising literature. Locate information from a business agreement which relates to commitments made in the agreement. Locate specific information included in different types of directories.
2. The student will read and demonstrate an understanding of written materials:	Read a given selection and answer appropriate questions to demonstrate comprehension of factual information. Draw a conclusion from reading a selection. Identify the main idea from a reading selection. Determine if a newspaper article presents factual information or only the writer's opinion. Follow directions for appropriate use of a product from the product label. From a picture of a sign, choose from a list of alternatives an appropriate response to the message of the sign. Given a set of simple directions, answer appropriate questions concerning procedure and sequence.

MINIMUM COMPETENCIES: READING

PART ONE: AN OVERVIEW

I. Exactly what are the tasks at hand for English/Language Arts/Reading educators?

   A. Short Range: Prepare for the fall, 1978 testing

   B. Long Range: Review and revise the curriculum to insure that the reading competencies are effeciently taught and learned.

II. How may these two tasks be done?

   A. Acquire knowledge about the process.

   B. Assign specific tasks and responsibilities.

   C. Review curriculum and revise as necessary.

   D. Provide careful instructional planning and management.

   E. Improve instructional methods as needed.

PART TWO: INFORMATION ABOUT THE IOX READING SKILLS TEST

I. The reading skills test was produced by the Instructional Objectives Exchange, Los Angeles, California, under the direction of Dr. James Popham and was adapted to test for the two student competencies which were recommended by Virginia's Minimum Competency Advisory Committee and approved by the Board of Education. These competencies are as follows:

   A. The student will locate specific information contained in printed material.

   B. The student will read and demonstrate an understanding of written materials.

II. The IOX test is designed to test for five specific skills. They are as follows:

   A. Understanding Safety Warnings;

B. Completing Forms and Applications;

C. Using Common Reference Sources;

D. Determining Main Ideas;

E. Using Documents to Take Action.

III. Why were these five specific skills included in the test?

A. It is believed that their demonstration will stand as proof that the tested student has in fact mastered the required competencies.

B. These five skills embody a limited focus approach to criterion referenced testing which will facilitate the testing process.

C. These five major skills subsume many lesser skills which are also of significant educational and practical value.

D. While the IOX test covers many subskills, it none-the-less, focuses on the major skills being tested clearly enough to provide significant information for instructional designers.

IV. Several instructional principals are of critical importance in teaching these five skills.

A. Competency Comprehension: The teacher must thoroughly understand what is to be taught.

B. Task Description: The students must know what kind of skill they are supposed to be mastering.

C. Motivation: The students must see the relevance and importance of the skill.

D. Appropriate Practice: Teachers should provide abundant practice opportunities for students in performing the class of behavior called for to demonstrate that the skill has been mastered.

V. General information about the test.

A. For each of the five skills covered by the test, the student will respond to ten test items. This number of responses will provide a more reliable estimate of the student's status than a lesser number of responses could provide.

B. Multiple choices or true false answers will be provided for all test entries.

C. A Teacher's Guide is available from the producers of the IOX Reading Test. It provides information such as:

1. A description of each skill that will be tested;
2. An overview of the testing procedure for each skill;
3. A sample test item;
4. A description of elegible test content;
5. An analysis of answer choices for the sample;
6. Teaching strategies useful in preparing students for the test;
7. The Teacher's Guide for the IOX Reading Test contains a vocabulary list of technical terms used in the test.

VI. Sample test item: Understanding Safety Warnings

Directions: Read the safety warnings in the boxes below, and answer the questions that follow.

COLD MEDICINE

ADULT DOSAGE: Two tablets every four hours, one to four daily as needed, or as directed by physician. For children 6 to 12 years of age, use half the adult dosage.
WARNING: Do not give to children under 6 or use for more than ten days unless directed by a physician. KEEP THIS AND ALL MEDICINES OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN.

CAUTION: Do not take without consulting a physician if under medical care. Consult a dentist promptly for toothache.

1. Your three-year old brother has a cold, and you give him one half of one cold tablet. According to the warning above, you are acting:

   a. correctly

   b. incorrectly

PART THREE: INFORMATION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR LONG-RANGE PLANNING

I. Each school's total curriculum should be evaluated so as to determine whether the achievement of minimum competencies in reading is a reasonable expectation. In cases where it is not, revision of the curriculum should occur.

CONTENT AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

A. English/Language Arts/Reading teachers should be asked to identify content and teaching strategies which will support the competency program.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AND RECORDS

B. Teachers should develop classroom management and record keeping systems which will document process toward the attainment of the required competencies.

INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION

C. Teachers need to develop methods of individualization which may be a part of the instruction which some students will require.

SPECIAL CLASSES

D. In some cases, special classes in English/ Language Arts may be needed.

TEACHER INSERVICE

E. Plans should be made for inservice education for teachers in order to help them cope with the new competency requirements.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS AND CONCEPTS OF CITIZENSHIP, INCLUDING KNOWLEDGE OF HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT, NECESSARY FOR RESPONSIBLE PARTICIPATION IN AMERICAN SOCIETY WITHIN THE WORLD COMMUNITY

Interpretation of Competency Statement

Education for responsible citizenship is an individual, family, school and community endeavor. Many experiences from kindergarten through grade twelve serve as a foundation for citizenship education. The social studies program, however, is a major curricular area for which a central focus is citizenship education.

Essential skills and concepts of citizenship in American society are much the same today as they were many years ago, even in the midst of rapid change. Responsible participation by the individual in American society continues to require certain basic essentials: knowledge, skills, commitment, and action. In application, each generation defines essential citizenship skills and concepts to fit the demands of its times.

Terms such as, law abiding, participation, informed, responsible, are often used in defining citizenship. However, if asked to define and rank such terms in order of importance, Americans might find it difficult to reach an agreement. Despite a lack of agreement on the precise meaning of such concepts, there are some common assumptions regarding citizenship education. Such assumptions include the need for students to understand democratic ideals and traditions, political and economic institutions and processes, personal rights and responsibilites, awareness of citizen-group activities which influence public policy, and the recognition of the importance of responsible participation in daily civic affairs.

Minimum competencies in the area of citizenship are not intended to define the entire scope of the social studies program in the public schools

but rather to center on minimum essential skills and concepts drawn from the social studies which are necessary for responsible participation in American life. The role and process of economics, government, and the role of history in shaping everyday life, as well as the impact of world affairs on the individual, are important ingredients in the process of preparing students for responsible participation in American society. Skills such as obtaining appropriate services available through social and governmental agencies, demonstrating a knowledge of the voting process, analyzing information as a basis for solving current problems, identifying factors that influence the prices the consumer must pay in the marketplace, locating information, following directions, and reading maps may be thought of as minimal.

Sample Assessment Procedures

"Local authorities shall require evidence, through performance related assessment tasks as part of the instructional program and/or through a test if preferred by a locality, that graduates have attained the minimum competency in citizenship."*

A variety of ways might be utilized in assessing student mastery of the citizenship competency including actual performance situations, simulated performance situations, school products and performances, and paper and pencil examinations.

Actual Performance Situations (civic participation)

This might be considered the ideal situation for assessing student mastery of the citizenship competency since actual performance in civic activities would most accurately reflect genuine competence. This method for assessment may be time consuming and costly.

*Standards for Accrediting Schools in Virginia, Adopted by the Board of Education July 1976 with revisions July 1978, Department of Education, Commonwealth of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia 23216, July 1978, pg. 18

Simulated Performance Situations (established in the school to resemble circumstances or situations simlar to those faced by citizens). An example of a simulated situation might be a mock election where students register to vote, analyze issues, make decisions, and vote for the candidate of their choice. A second exmaple might be a mock trial where students demonstrate an understanding of consitutional law and courtroom procedures. A third example might be participating in Junior Achievement programs where students conduct market research, design a product, acquire capital for materials, manufacture and market the product, thereby demonstrating an understanding of economics, business, and the American economic system. Simulated performance situations are useful and may be a part of a local school assessment program in citizenship.

School Products and Performances (individual student projects in citizenship involving surveys, personal interviews, internships, performance in student government, acceptance of school responsibilities and duties, and others). This method is useful as a part of a local school assessment program; however, the criteria for assessing should be identified so that the teacher and student will know what is being used as a basis for assessment. To minimize subjectivity, a local school division may wish to utilize a panel of evaluators instead of an individual teacher in judging the results of the products and performances.

Paper and Pencil Examinations (constructed and administered by the local school system as part of a total assessment program or used alone). The paper and pencil examination suffers from a number of disadvantages including the cost of constructing a quality examination, difficulty in assessing certain outcomes of citizenship with multiple choice formats, and the inherent problem of the need for students to accurately read the question

in order to demonstrate their knowledge.

Local school divisions might choose to give consideration to the use of a battery of tests instead of a single test. A battery of tests would tend to limit the disadvantages of having to sample only a narrow band of citizenship knowledge, skill, and attitude outcomes. School systems may also wish to have an adequate number of test items (at least 4-5) for each competency or performance indicator.

In summary, as assessment techniques move from actual performance situations toward paper and pencil examinations, assessment becomes simpler and less expensive; but the assessment results become less likely to predict later success. On the other hand, as techniques move away from paper and pencil examinations, subjectivity tends to increase. Local school divisions may, therefore, wish to utilize several of the suggested techniques in order to minimize these deficiencies.

In order to graduate from an accredited secondary school and receive a high school diploma, students should demonstrate to the satisfaction of local school officials the attainment of knowledge and skills to qualify for further education or employment.*

EMPLOYMENT

Minimum Competencies may be developed through:	Demonstrated performance acceptable for employment may be determined by:
1. Completion of a competency-based occupational preparation program.	Successful completion of the sequence of courses included in an approved competency-based occupational program. Appropriate records should be maintained on the competencies developed.
2. Completion of a competency-based senior intensified occupational preparation program.	Successful completion of an approved twelfth-grade competency-based intensified program. Appropriate records should be maintained on the competencies developed.
3. Completion of part of a competency-based occupational preparation program.	Completion of part of a competency-based occupational preparation program when it can be determined by the vocational teacher, guidance personnel, and other appropriate persons that competencies needed for a specific job in an occupational cluster as described in the Dictionary of Occupational Titles have been developed.
4. Independent or self-study, or a type of work education or work experience.	A. Vocational teachers, guidance personnel, and other appropriate personnel (employers) that competencies needed for a specific job as described in the Dictionary of Occupational Titles have been developed. B. Work experience refers to employment whereby skills are learned through on-the-job activities. Employers or supervisors may be asked to evaluate student's competencies. C. Independent or self-study may involve a variety of activities undertaken through the self-initiative of the students.

*Standards for Accrediting Secondary Schools in Virginia, revised July 1978.

In addition to competencies needed for successfully handling job tasks, the development of certain other minimum competencies related to job search, applying for a job, and personal characteristics should be demonstrated.

These may include:	As evidenced by:
1. Locating job vacancies.	A knowledge of community agencies which provide assistance.
2. Applying for a job.	A. Successfully completing sample employment applications. B. Good job interview techniques as demonstrated by written responses to questions or statements or through role playing. C. An understanding of appropriate dress when applying for a job.

MINIMUM COMPETENCIES AND HANDICAPPED STUDENTS

Rationale for the Inclusion of Handicapped Students in the Testing for Minimum Competencies

A handicapping condition, by virtue of its presence and effect upon a student, does not, of itself, preclude the possibility that a student can achieve the competencies required for graduation. Many students who are handicapped are capable of average or above average achievement and learning ability. Therefore, to exclude all handicapped students from the minimum competency requirements would discriminate against those handicapped students who would be entitled to a regular diploma at graduation.

Also, federal regulations under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, require that handicapped individuals be given equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from the customary policies and procedures granted to all individuals.

In addition, it should be remembered that there are many students who are disabled but not identified as handicapped that are in the public school system of Virginia. These students may require some of the special accommodations outlined in the material that follows. This would include students who were identified as handicapped earlier in their educational program but who are now full time participants in the regular educational system.

Relationship of the Individualized Education Program and Minimum Competencies

It is understood that during the course of a student's education there are to be preliminary evaluations to discern the extent of achievement a student is making toward meeting the requirements of minimum competencies for graduation. These evaluations should identify the student's progress in achieving the competencies and areas of weakness. The IEP developed for a handicapped student should address the weaknesses the student demonstrates and these weaknesses

should be reflected in the long range goals as well as the short term objectives.

ACCOMMODATIONS IN MINIMUM COMPETENCY TESTING SITUATIONS FOR VARIOUS HANDICAPPING CONDITIONS

Introduction

The purpose of the following is to provide a framework of understanding concerning special considerations that should be made for handicapped children who will be taking the minimum competency test.

For example, a visually impaired student may be an expert reader but have a different method of reading (Braille) from the regular education student. Therefore, arrangements need to be made so that this student's true knowledge and abilities can be tested.

Decisions as to which accommodations are needed for a handicapped child in a particular category should be made with the recommendations of the student's special education teacher. (For example, not every visually impaired child will need all three accommodations shown below; some visually impaired students may need no special accommodations in order to be tested fairly, or a student with very poor muscle control may have difficulty marking within the space provided on a computerized answer sheet.)

It is assumed, in setting forth the following considerations, that the goal of minimum competency testing is to ascertain the level of knowledge the child has in each area being tested.

Applicable to Handicapped Children in General

(1) Provide opportunity for all special education students to become acquainted with the type of test to be given, through trial questions/answers.

(2) Allow tests to be given by a person familiar to the child.

(3) If needed, allow adjustment of time in which the test is to be completed.

(4) Provide a quiet testing room, with carrels when necessary, for students who are easily distracted by background noise and/or movement.

(5) Determine the place where the testing will take place (regular education or special education classroom, administrative office, student's home) according to the individual student's needs.

(6) If the test requires students to respond orally, and a student has difficulty with oral expression (hearing impaired, speech/language impaired, motor impaired--cerebral palsied, learning disabled), make exceptions in the testing requirements for such items.

(7) Provide ways for the student to demonstrate his/her competencies in a practical manner (e.g., instead of asking for the "radius of a circle," ask the student to "measure from the center of the circle to the edge."

Applicable to Particular Handicapping Conditions

Visually Impaired

(1) Provide for test to be given/taken in Braille and/or provide test in large type

(2) Secure necessary equipment (e.g., magnifying materials, electronic readers) from Virginia Commission for the Visually Handicapped.

Hearing Impaired

(1) Seat student near front of room

(2) Have person giving instructions face the student

(3) Determine ahead of time that the student's hearing aid is in optimal working condition

(4) Provide interpreter if needed

Learning Disabled

(1) Allow student to wear noise buffer over ears if needed.

Speech

(1) Student with speech problems at the secondary level should not present any concerns as far as testing for minimum competencies. The speech student who has other handicapping conditions should be treated as suggested under that category.

Emotionally Disturbed

(1) Provide for the student to take the test alone or in a small group

(2) Allow the student to take the test at the time of day and during a time in his/her treatment process when the student can handle the stress

(3) Allow test to be taken in time increments appropriate to the student's attention span

(4) Provide noise-buffers for student to wear over ears, if needed

Orthopedically Imparied (cerebral palsy, amputation, polio, bone tuberculosis, etc.)

(1) Provide an adapted typewriter or communication board, if needed

(2) Allow oral response, if needed

Other Health Impaired (sickle cell anemia, asthma, epilepsy, tuberculosis, leukemia, etc.)

(1) Provide for test to be given at home by the evaluator if child is homebound

(2) Administer the test during a stable time in the student's condition

GUIDANCE ROLE IN COMPETENCY BASED EDUCATION

The guidance counselors can assume a keyrole in helping students attain the minimum competencies. Following are some suggested activities which will assist in implementing the program:

1. In cooperation with the entire school staff, provide interpretation about the minimum competency program to students, parents, and the lay public.

   Notice, "in cooperation with the entire school staff." Obviously, guidance cannot do it alone - it takes a cooperative, unified working relationship to get the job done. Counselors are eager to give full measure.

2. Provide assistance with inserivce activities for school staff involved in competency-test administration.

   All certified counselors have had training in test and measurements and most have had much experience in the whole area of testing. Counselors can help in providing inservice activities for the school staff. A favorable testing climate must be provided, have staff throughly familiar with the tests to be administered, assist in providing needed orientation to students, and in working with the school and the home in test interpretation.

3. Consistent with local school board policy relative to the management of student scholastic records, utilized procedures for the collection, maintenance and security of competency-test results.

   It is obvious that records must be carefully kept and secured, along with the competency-test results. You will find counselors cooperative in this effort.

4. Provide appropriate input to the administration concerning curriculum planning and revision as they pertain to the needs of students.

Perhaps no other person on your staff will know more about what students are thinking or what the concerns of parents are then the counselors, for they work closely with both. It is suggested that you request counselor imput when curriculum planning and revision is done.

5. Provide assistance to students in making realistic course selections.

Perhaps no other single function will assure student success more than having students plan for and make realistic course selections. It is a well-known fact that we all are more enthusiastic and successful in those things in which we have had a part in the planning and the choice. This is also true of students, so a well planned, realistic course of study will enable students to be recpetive to instruction and more interested in passing each course. This knowledge will, of course, be reflected in the competency-test results.

6. Provide suggestions and/or identification of possible courses of action for students who may need instructional assistance.

For those students who are having difficulty--either in the affective or cognitive areas--counselors can identify and help students and teachers meet these individual needs.

7. Coordinate conferences with appropriate school staff and the parents of students with special needs as well as those in need of instructional assistance.

The counselors can serve as the most effective linkage between the school and the home. They possess excellent consultative skills and can play a vital role in having parental conferences go smoothly.

Reading

Competency 1 - The student will locate specific information contained in printed material.	Present (Title and Number)		Recommended (Title and Number)	
	Primary Course	Secondary Course	Primary Course	Secondary Course
Evidence of Performance:				
- Use library skills to locate information.				
- Read and locate information from a map.				
- Determine from a billing statement the information contained on that bill.				
- Locate specific information included in advertising literature.				
- Locate information from a business agreement which relates to commitments made in the agreement.				
- Locate specific information included in different types of directories.				

Competency 2 - The student will read and demonstrate an understanding of written materials.				
Evidence of Performance:				
- Read a given selection and answer appropriate questions to demonstrate comprehension of factual information.				

Competency 2 Con't Evidence of Performance:	Present (Title and Number)		Recommended (Title and Number)	
	Primary Course	Secondary Course	Primary Course	Secondary Course
- Draw a conclusion from reading a selection.				
- Identify the main idea from a reading selection.				
- Determine if a newspaper article presents factual information or only the writer's opinion.				
- Follow directions for appropriate use of a product from the product label.				
- From a picture of a sign, choose from a list of alternatives an appropriate response to the message of the sign.				
- Given a set of simple directions, answer appropriate questions concerning procedure and sequence.				

Computational

Competency 1 - The student will be able to read and write numerals correctly.	Present (Title and Number)		Recommended (Title and Number)	
	Primary Course	Secondary Course	Primary Course	Secondary Course
Evidence of Performance: - Given numerals naming whole numbers less than ten million, the student will read the numerals.				
- Given numerals naming whole numbers less than ten thousand, the student will write the word name for the number.				

Competency 2 - The student will be able to compare numerical values of whole numbers.				
Evidence of Performance: - Given a set of whole numbers, named by numerals of not more than four digits, the student will arrange the numerals in order from smallest numerical value to largest.				

Competency 3 - The student will be able to add, subtract, multiply, and divide whole numbers				

Competency 3 Con't	Present (Title and Number)		Recommended (Title and Number)	
Evidence of Performance:	Primary Course	Secondary Course	Primary Course	Secondary Course
- Given two, three, or four whole numbers named by numerals of not more than four digits, the student will find the sum.				
- Given two whole numbers named by numerals of not more than three digits, the student will find the difference.				
- Given two whole numbers named by numerals of not more than three digits, the student will find the product.				
- Given a dividend named by a numeral of no more than four digits and a divisor named by a numeral of no more than two digits, the student will find the quotient.				

Competency 4 - The student will be able to add, subtract, multiply, and divide decimal fractions.

Evidence of Performance:				
- Given two decimal fractions named by numerals of no more than four digits and having no more than three places to the right of the decimal point, the student will find the sum or difference.				
- Given two decimal fractions, named by numerals of three digits with the decimal point in any position, and the digits or their product, the student will properly place the missing decimal point in the product.				

Competency 4 Con't	Present (Title and Number)		Recommended (Title and Number)	
Evidence of Performance:	Primary Course	Secondary Course	Primary Course	Secondary Course
- Given a dividend of no more than four digits and no more than three decimal places, a divisor of no more than two digits and no more than one decimal place, and the digits of the quotient, the student will properly place the decimal point in the quotient.				
Competency 5 - The student will be able to multiply simple fractions.				
Evidence of Performance:				
- Given two simple fractions which have denominators of 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5, the student will find the product.				
Competency 6 - The student will be able to express percents as equivalent decimal fractions.				
Evidence of Performance:				
- Given a percent, the student will write the equivalent decimal fraction.				
Competency 7 - The student will be able to express fractions as equivalent decimal numbers.				

Competency 7 Con't Evidence of Performance	Present (Title and Number)		Recommended (Title and Number)	
	Primary Course	Secondary Course	Primary Course	Secondary Course
- Given a common fraction which has a single digit denominator, the student will write the equivalent decimal fraction.				
Competency 8 - The student will be able to find a given percent of a number.				
Evidence of Performance - Given a number and a percent (from 1-100 inclusive) the student will find the percentage.				
Competency 9 - The student will be able to read and draw conclusions from information contained in simple bar, broken-line and circle graphs.				
Evidence of Performance - Given a bar or broken-line graph, the student will estimate and compare quantitative information.				
- Given a circle graph in which each sector is labeled as a percent of the whole the student will compare quantitative information.				

Competency 9 Con't	Present (Title and Number)		Recommended (Title and Number)	
Evidence of Performance	Primary Course	Secondary Course	Primary Course	Secondary Course
- Given a bar, broken-line, or circle graph and a statement of inference, the student will state whether the inference is true or false based on information on the graph. (The inference will be a simple statement relative to comparisons of size or frequency and trends of increase, decrease, or constancy.)				

Competency 10 - The student will be able to determine distance based on information from a given map.

Evidence of Performance				
- Given a map and scale, the student will indicate the route of least mileage between two locations.				

Competency 11 - The student will be able to read tables to determine taxes, interest, or insurance premiums.

Evidence of Performance				
- Given a specified situation and a federal or state income tax table, the student will find the correct amount of tax.				
- Given the cost of an item(s) and a sales tax table, the student will find the correct amount of sales tax.				

	Present (Title and Number)		Recommended (Title and Number)	
	Primary Course	Secondary Course	Primary Course	Secondary Course
Competency 12 - The student will be able to identify objects and/or lines positioned in such a manner that the concept of parallelism is represented. And, identify certain parts - center, radius, and diameter - of a circle.				
Evidence of Performance: - Given a set of figures, the student will identify those which best represent the concept of parallelism. - Given an appropriate drawing of a circle, the student will identify the center, a radius and a diameter.				
Competency 13 - The student will be able to determine the perimeter and area of rectangular regions.				
Evidence of Performance: - Given the dimensions of a rectangular region, the student will find the area of the region. - Given the lengths of the sides of a rectangular region, the student will find the perimeter of the region.				
Competency 14 - The student will be able to identify units of measure for length, mass (weight), and capacity; read a thermometer; and determine elapsed time. Maximum 12 hour time interval.)				

Competency 14 Con't Evidence of Performance:	Present (Title and Number)		Recommended (Title and Number)	
	Primary Course	Secondary Course	Primary Course	Secondary Course
- Given a list of units of measure, the student will identify those indicating length (metre, centimetre, kilometre; foot, inch, mile) mass/weight (kilogram gram; pound) and capacity (litre, mill litre, pint, quart, gallon), or vice versa.				
- Given a drawing of either a Celsius or Fahrenheit thermometer, the student will write the indicated temperature to the nearest degree.				
- Given two times (to the nearest ½ hour designation) within a 12 hour time interval, the student will determine the elapsed time.				

Competency 15 - The student will be able to solve practical problems dealing with banking, consumer purchases, and personal earnings.

Evidence of Performance:				
- Given an amount of money, $1, $5, or $10, and the total amount of purchase, the student will determine the correct change.				
- Given a specified number of hours worked and an hourly rate of pay, the student will compute the wages.				
- Given the gross earnings and the amounts of deduction for social security and federal and state taxes, the student will compute the net earnings.				

Competency 15 Con't Evidence Performance:	Present (Title and Number)		Recommended (Title and Number)	
	Primary Course	Secondary Course	Primary Course	Secondary Course
- Given the appropriate information, the student will write a check.				
- Given the appropriate information, the student will complete a check stub.				
- Given the prices of similar packaged goods the student will determine and compare unit prices.				
- Given the regular price of an item and a rate of discount, the student will compute the amount of discount.				

Appendix H

FOR: News Media

RELEASE: Upon Receipt

Students now enrolled in the tenth grade in Virginia's public high schools will be the first to feel the effects of a Board of Education requirement that they must pass minimum competency tests in reading and mathematics before being granted diplomas, _____ superintendent of schools said today.

The tests will be given to the tenth graders this fall on a date not yet set and to the ninth graders next spring, _____ said.

High school students will be required to pass the minimum competency tests in addition to completing the traditional 18 units of English, mathematics, history, sciences, and other courses needed for a high school diploma.

Standards of Quality adopted by the 1978 General Assembly specify that "in order to receive a diploma from an accredited secondary school after January 1, 1981, students must earn the number of units of credit prescribed by the Board of Education and attain minimum competencies prescribed by the board . . ." The standards also specify that "attainment of such competencies shall be demonstrated by means of a test prescribed by the Board of Education."

Beginning next spring, the test will be given to ninth graders each year. Still under study by the Board of Education is the question of whether students who pass the competency tests in the ninth grade will have to take similar tests in the twelfth grade.

Students who fail the tests will be given further instruction and will be permitted to take different forms of the tests each year until they pass them, _____ said.

As approved by the Board of Education, the tests will measure academic and life skills and the application of those skills in practical situations.

On the mathematics test, students will be required to read and write numerals correctly, to work with fractions and percentages, to compute taxes, make correct change in a commercial transaction, and calculate net earnings.

The reading test will assess students' abilities to understand and draw conclusions from selected lists of reading materials as well as to locate information in a library. They also will be asked to determine if a newspaper item represents fact or opinion and interpret directions on an item purchased in a grocery or department store.

Superintendent _____ emphasized that the tests are designed to measure what are believed to be minimum skills. They are not designed, he said, to measure all the academic skills an average twelfth grader should have achieved.

Concerns and Suggestions for Department of Education
Planning and Assistance to Local School Divisions

Major Concerns Relative To:	Suggested Action by Department of Education or School
I. Pretest Orientation for	
a. Students	
b. Teachers	
c. Parents	
II. Test Environment	
a. Administration	
b. Facilities	
III. Interpretation and Dissemination of Test Results	
a. Students	
b. Teachers	
c. Parents	
IV. Instructional Implications	
V. Record Keeping	

EVALUATION

Minimum Competencies Orientation Region _____

Circle applicable number:

Presentations were

1. Too early 2. Timely 3. Too Late

Information presented answered

1. All of our questions 2. Most of our questions
3. Few of our questions

Information was

1. Very beneficial 2. Generally beneficially
3. Of little or no benefit

Indicate other groups you believe should have this information.